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Chairman: Mr. Manczyk (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Poland)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Saha

Contents

Agenda item 124: Programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (*continued*)

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (continued)

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In the absence of Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda), Mr. Manczyk (Poland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 124: Programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (*continued*)

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (*continued*) (A/60/7/Add.37 and A/60/585/Add.1 and Add.2)

1. **Mr. Elji** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation supported the good-offices role of the Secretary-General. The concept of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council had been expanded recently to include administrative structures and committees of the Security Council. Given that expansion, the continuation of the approach used in the past to determine which activities should be funded from the provision for special political missions was open to question. Moreover, the budget for special political missions had greatly increased in recent years, reaching hundreds of millions of dollars and placing a heavy burden on Member States, particularly small countries. The problem was compounded by the fact that most of those missions were authorized by a Security Council with limited membership and, at the same time, were funded from the regular budget. Because special political missions were similar to peacekeeping missions in that they were authorized by Security Council resolutions, they should be funded according to the scale of assessments for the peacekeeping budget.

2. Results-based budgeting had been applied to special political missions. Such budgeting, however, had several shortcomings. Most of the expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement with respect to special political missions were formulated in a manner that was inconsistent with the mandates and purposes of the missions. General Assembly resolution 55/231 on results-based budgeting requested the Secretary-General to ensure that expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement referred to achievements in the implementation of the programmes of the Organization and not those of individual Member States. Furthermore, in many instances, the presentation of the expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement and the establishment of a link between them did not conform to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.

3. The sensitive nature of special political missions required the Secretariat to ensure that the budgets presented were fully in line with General Assembly resolution 55/231. His delegation therefore expected that programme narratives would be included in future documents so that intergovernmental bodies could ensure that programme elements were consonant with the mandates of the programmes concerned. It would therefore be submitting proposals in informal consultations to involve intergovernmental mechanisms in the monitoring of the programme narratives.

4. His delegation drew particular attention to paragraph 30 of the Secretary-General's report (A/60/585/Add.2), concerning the Office of the Special Envoy for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004). The first two indicators of achievement, which concerned the establishment of mutual diplomatic relations between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic and the demarcation of borders between the two countries, were unrelated to the mandate established by Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) and violated the rules governing results-based budgeting. They also constituted interference in the internal affairs of Member States, in violation of the Charter. Moreover, the indicators did not measure the Secretariat's performance in implementing the programme; rather, they measured the performance of individual States, in contravention of General Assembly resolution 55/231.

5. His delegation opposed the broadening of the mandate laid down in resolution 1559 (2004) and rejected the politicization of the work of the Committee on what should be a technical matter. With regard to diplomatic relations and the demarcation of borders between the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon, a political decision had been taken by the two sisterly countries, and there were bilateral discussions between them on how they could proceed when circumstances so permitted. The Secretariat should clarify the guidelines on budget documents in

order to avoid further violations of the mandates of the programmes to which they referred. Given the current situation, the Committee should think twice about the use of results-based budgeting for special political missions.

6. **Mr. Wai** (Myanmar) said that there was a factual error concerning his Government in the section of the Secretary-General's report (A/60/585/Add.1) that concerned the Special Envoy for Myanmar. Contrary to what was stated in paragraph 1.3 of the report, the national reconciliation process in Myanmar had never come to a halt. On the contrary, the process was ongoing and would continue for as long as was necessary.

7. **Mr. Ramadan** (Lebanon) said that his Government welcomed the report of the Secretary-General, as well as all international efforts aimed at ensuring strict respect for Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence, as called for by the relevant Security Council resolutions, and in turn expressed its respect for all United Nations resolutions. Lebanon was thankful for the assistance rendered by the International Independent Investigation Commission to its authorities in their investigation into the 14 February 2005 terrorist bombing that had targeted former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and the investigation of other terrorist acts perpetrated in Lebanon since October 2004. Lebanon commended the efforts of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for Lebanon to contribute to the achievement of political stability and the maintenance of international peace and security in southern Lebanon.

8. Lebanon attached great importance to the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Syrian Arab Republic, based on the principles of international law and mutual respect for sovereignty and independence, as called for at the Lebanese National Dialogue Conference on 16 March 2006. In accordance with the consensus reached by the Lebanese people, the Lebanese Government looked forward to the demarcation of the country's borders with the Syrian Arab Republic.

9. Lastly, his delegation hoped for the early approval of the budgets for the political missions pertaining to Lebanon, given their role in promoting stability in Lebanon and throughout the region.

10. **Ms. Udo** (Nigeria) said she would welcome answers to the questions raised at the preceding meeting.

11. **Mr. Thatchaichawalit** (Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts) said that the presentation of the budgets of the special political missions was an area that was still evolving. His Office would continue to make efforts to improve its presentation of results-based budgeting and financial information. Second, the issue of synergies and complementarities among different field operations and offices at Headquarters had been taken into consideration in formulating the budgets of all special political missions. His Office welcomed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee on how to improve such synergies and complementarities. Third, concerns had been raised about how the budgetary information had been formulated and about the assumptions on which it was based. The Secretariat had looked at experience with respect to the implementation of the various mandates in the previous biennium. Adjustments had been made in view of patterns of expenditure and, perhaps more importantly, actual vacancy rates, particularly in larger operations such as the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. At the same time, the Office had tried to strike a balance between the experience of budgetary implementation and the need to maintain each mission's optimal capacity to carry out its mandate. He would provide detailed answers to the other questions in the informal consultations.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.